

MURDER OR MERCY.

A Story of To-Day.

It was half-past four, and the morning room at Minton Court was dotted with confidential groups. Huge logs blazed in the two fireplaces, but no lamps or candles had been brought in to disturb the incandescence of the twilight hour. Tea at Minton Court was always drunk by firelight on winter afternoons. "Darkness is such an aid to scandal," Lady Minton used to say; "how can we pull our neighbors to pieces in the glare of those odious lamps? Half the best things I have ever heard have been told me in the dusk."

The hour of tea was a sociable one, and the surroundings were thoroughly feminine. The morning room was furnished in that heterogeneous manner which is the characteristic of our time. There were many screens, and palms in brass pots, Indian divans and Japanese tables, Turkish mats and Smyrnesse carvings, while a number of Rajon etchings, framed in black, made a sad note on the Pompeian red walls, giving the touch of over-luxurious room that touches of studied paths which is ever present in the complex and many-sided life of to-day. The curtains were not yet drawn, and far off, apart from the group of dainty fingers who were clustering round the tea-table and the fire, stood a young girl with her face pressed against the window. It was a cold, melancholy afternoon, and outside a heavy white fog was gathering over the frost-bitten ground, making a fine contrast to the gay and cheery scene within doors. Suddenly she turned with a cynical little laugh from the window. "What a fool I am!" said the girl to herself. "I have been standing at that cold window for exactly twenty minutes. And for what reason? Because Dr. Brooke chose to go out for a walk over the moors on a particularly impossible day, and hasn't come back yet. Is that a reason why I should go without my tea, not to mention the awful possibility of catching a cold in my head, and having a red nose? Oh, thanks, Capt. Egerton, I should like some tea, awfully"—and repeating the last sentence aloud, Alison Bligh came forward into the fire-light.

Even in the flickering fire-rays she revealed herself as a very striking girl. There was an unmistakable touch of sensuousness in the full lips and in the clear-cut nostrils, which were the best part of a nose which was somewhat too thick for a woman, and in the fine curves of her shoulders and bust. But intellect was not wanting, as her broad, well-marked forehead proved; nor determination, which was revealed in the square lines of her jaw and chin; nor a certain amount of idealism, which looked out of her somewhat dreamy eyes—dark, Southern eyes which were in direct contradiction to the twists of pale red-gold hair which crowned her head. In sum, a very dangerous young woman, whom Lady Minton was wont to declare she would not trust with her own husband, although Sir Francis was past 70, and a model of the conjugal virtues.

Miss Bligh felt her spirits rise suddenly as she took her place in the cheery round and fire, and she smiled when she thought of her watch by the window just now. How cold and miserable she had felt—how ridiculous to have ceded to such a sentimental impulse! That was not her way either; she who had long ago made up her mind to snatch every moment of happiness—every pleasurable emotion even—like coffee offered her. And then the soft voice of Lady Minton was heard saying: "Alison, when you have quite finished with Capt. Egerton and those muffins, pass them both on. And do, like a dear child, sing us something."

"Miss Bligh thereupon sprang up and went to the open piano. "I will sing you," she said gravely, "a little romance which I heard once at the Varieties. I believe it has a moral. Judic used to sing it, and striking up a quaint accompaniment, she sang some words familiar enough on the boulevards.

While the room was echoing with plaudits on her rather risky performance, the door opened and a man of about 35 came in and sat down in a rocking-chair at the far end of the room. "Awfully good, by Jove!" cried Capt. Egerton, who was leaning on the piano. "I could have sworn it was Judic, herself, only you aren't fat, you know." The last part of the gallant captain's sentence was a tender whisper intended for Miss Bligh's ear alone, but, like many other soft speeches, was audible to the rest of the room. Dr. Brooke frowned as he moved from his seat near the door and, coming forward into the firelight, asked Lady Minton for a cup of tea.

"So glad you're back, Doctor! We all thought you were lost on Exmoor," said Lady Minton pouring over her guest as she poured him out some tea.

"Yes, we were all looking forward to seeing you brought home stiffly frozen on a shutter!" cried Alison, who seemed in the highest spirits. Had she forgotten her impatient watch by the window only half an hour before?

"Ah, the gods don't love me. I shall not die young," said the Doctor, whose keen eyes were riveted on her face. Then the party broke up in tiny small groups, and it was either by choice or by chance that she found herself, only a few minutes later, standing alone with him at the same window at which she had watched half an hour before.

"I am glad you are back," she said at last, half-shyly, as the young man stood and gazed at her in the dusk.

"Are you? You knew I was out there?"

"Yes."

"None of the others missed me, I should imagine. They were playing some game which looked uncommonly like 'kiss-in-the-ring' when I left. Were you one of that lot?"

"Oh, no. I have been in my room all the afternoon."

"Thank heaven for that!"

Alison smiles at the fervor of his tone.

"Would you have minded much if I had been 'one of that lot'?"

The Doctor frowned. "I should have been rather disappointed. I should have thought very little of you if you had."

"Well—I wasn't. But I am afraid it is not a sense of the outraged proprieties which kept me from playing 'kiss-in-the-ring' in the hall. If it could possibly have amused me, I should have done so. I believe in amusing oneself. But somehow or other, that sort of thing doesn't entertain me. Perhaps I am too old—or not old enough; anyhow, I don't care for the infantine pastimes which are the fashion now. I suppose when I am getting on for forty I shall like them."

"No, I don't think you ever will," said Brooke, smiling down at her charming upturned face.

"But I am afraid you don't understand me," she said quickly; "you think me better than I am. I have no moral aim, no aspirations, nothing of that kind. I simply enjoy the present. I suppose, if I wanted to pose, I should call myself an epicurean. It is strange, but 'to-morrow' has absolutely no meaning for me; I believe in 'to-day.' I mean to enjoy every hour of my life. After all, what do we know of 'to-morrow'? Nothing. But we do know that roses are divine! And pulling a hothouse flower from her waist belt, the girl pressed it, with a pretty, unconventional gesture, to her lips.

"At that rate," said the Doctor, "if you were to have some great misfortune—to lose all your money, for instance, or catch the smallpox—you would have very little to fall back upon. You might feel the want of the 'consolations of religion.'"

"No, I don't think I should. If any great unhappiness," she added dreamily, "were ever to befall me, I should not want to live. I did not ask to come into the world, and why, forsooth, should I not go when I am tired of it? Life after all, is very like a party to which some one else has insisted on our going. If we are bored, we are surely not bound to wait till the very end. We leave when we please."

Dr. Brooke looked steadily at her.

"You are a very strange girl, Miss Bligh. Not one woman in a thousand would dare to say such a thing as that. But I think you are right. There are cases when death is a release from torture, mental and bodily."

"How did we get on such a lugubrious topic?" said Alison, shivering slightly and turning away from the dark landscape.

There was a pause and then the young man said suddenly:

"Why did you sing that song just now?"

"I don't know," said Alison with drooping eyes.

"Do you know what it means?"

"Do you?" she said, raising her eyebrows innocently.

"I walked the hospitals in Paris for two years. I understood every word."

"Oh, I am sorry. I thought, with my accent and an English audience, that I should be perfectly safe."

"Don't do it again," he said; "for heaven's sake, don't. You can't imagine how dreadful it is to see you do a thing like that."

"Thank you for saying that," he answered, gravely. "Sing something for me now, will you?"

Miss Bligh answered by moving away to the piano. Brooke stood still by the window, looking out over the snow-covered grounds and waiting to hear what she would sing. Alison's fingers strayed tentatively over the keys, as if seeking the strain which suited her mood best. Presently her clear young voice was heard in Handel's immortal air, "Lascia Chio Pianga."

"Handel, instead of boulevard songs"—Duncan Brooke smiled to himself—"that will do. Alison loves me. I know it—I can see it in her eyes."

It was a passionate yet half-paternal feeling that Dr. Brooke had for this beautiful girl; a feeling akin to that which the tiger cherishes toward its cub, and yet with a yearning tenderness, too. He felt that he would gladly have thrown away his life to save her pain, but as it was, he meant to devote his life to her pleasure. Nothing should be spared that could give her pleasure—this little epicurean who believed so devoutly in the Now! There was nothing, too, which could stand in the way of an immediate marriage. Duncan Brooke had already made a brilliant reputation and a large practice, and Alison being an orphan, with a fortune of her own, there would be no difficulties about their settling down at once. His house in Grosvenor street was a fair-sized one, and with Alison's taste in furniture and pictures, might be made one of the prettiest in London. He smiled as he saw a vision of her radiant face at the head of his dinner-table, smiling at his guests, perfect in her young matronhood. Somehow he always thought of her in connection with beautiful and pleasant things; with flowers, and pictures, and music, and the sparkle of dinner-table wit. She had told him that day that she loved roses; well, she should have roses on her table every day of the year. And then Brooke remembered that pearls were another hobby of Alison's. He would telegraph to town to-morrow for the finest necklace he could get.

That night, when Lady Minton had sent her maid away, a pink-robed figure knocked at her door and knocked a pair of soft arms tight round her neck.

"My dear child, what is the matter?" she grasped in the midst of this impetuous embrace.

"It's all settled—and I'm so happy!"

"Indeed," said Lady Minton, laughing. "And may I ask who is the lucky man?"

"Oh, Dr. Brooke, of course. How can you ask?"

"My dear, all the men in the house are mad about you. I listen to their confidences—you know my way."

"Well, you shan't be bored with any more, you dear thing. Please let them know that I am the happiest woman in the world."

A week later Lady Minton and two or three of her guests stood at the hall door to see the Doctor and Miss Bligh mount the dog-cart for a drive. Lady Minton was profuse in her advice.

"Now, mind you take care of Alison, Doctor. That mare is rather frisky and the roads are slippery to-day. You've got to bring Alison back safe and sound. We don't want to have a 'case' for you down here."

The doctor smiled as Miss Bligh came down the wide oak staircase. A week's happiness had changed a handsome girl into a young goddess. In her tight-fitting, manly garments, and the soft furs at her throat, she looked the personification of youth. Her eyes—always fine—seemed twice as large, and had acquired a soft expression which was irresistible; the cynical little laugh, which had formerly been one of her characteristics, had disappeared.

Another two minutes and the girl was snugly tucked under a fur rug on the front seat of the high dog-cart, and Brooke, touching the mare with his whip, sent her flying down the long carriage drive.

How ridiculously those people are in love with each other!" said Lady Minton, with a little sigh. "Upon my word, it is quite Acadian. I wonder how long it will last!"

"About six months, I take it," drawled Capt. Egerton; "at least I hope so. Miss Bligh won't look at any other fellow than saw-hones. But it can't last, that sort of thing. Quite unvitalized you know."

"Well they are to be married in six weeks," laughed Lady Minton. "So this time next year we shall see you making the running with the beautiful Mrs. Brooke?"

"Nothing more likely in the world," replied Capt. Egerton, who had a royal idea of his own powers of fascination.

At the luncheon table two chairs were vacant. "I wonder where our two young people have got to?" said Lady Minton. "I wish Dr. Brooke would not take her long expeditions, it makes me very uneasy."

"They are probably lurching somewhere a deuce, dear Lady Minton," suggested the "frisky matron" of the party.

"I don't know where they will lurch out on Exmoor, and I don't feel at all sure about that mare. She is getting a regular jade."

The afternoon closed in and there were still no signs of the girl and her lover. Tea had been brought in and Lady Minton was trying to hide her growing alarm as she chatted with guests and did the honors of the tea table.

"I am sure I heard wheels at the front door of the house," she said suddenly.

"Yes, but it is not the dog-cart, said Capt. Egerton; "those were cart-wheels I heard."

"Go out and see what it is, for goodness sake. No carts ever come up to the court after dusk!"

The young man hurried out of the room and a minute later a scared footman came and whispered to Lady Minton. Hurrying into the hall she was met by Egerton and Brooke. The Doctor's face was destitute of every vestige of color and his eyes seemed to have sunk far back into his head.

"There has been a bad accident"

"Where is Allison," cried Lady Minton, "she is not!"

"No, not dead; but she is very seriously wounded. Can you bear the worst?"

"Take me to her, my poor darling!" wailed Lady Minton.

"We have carried her here, into Sir Francis' study; and she must not be moved any more. Don't look at her face, Lady Minton. I want you to be strong—to help me."

A motionless heap lay on the sofa, and that heap was Alison Bligh. Piteous groans came from her lips, and one side of her face was carefully bound up with a man's white silk handkerchief.

"Make up a bed quickly here. Call her maid—if she has strong nerves—to help you take of her clothes. I can tell you nothing definite till I have examined her. Bring some brandy."

These orders were briefly given by the Doctor as he hurried from the room to fetch his case of surgical instruments.

An hour later the worst was known. The girl's spine was badly injured that she would never be able to rise again. One side of her face had been so terribly crushed that she was hardly recognizable, and her sufferings were acute. She might live, the Doctor thought, but her life would be so many years of mental and bodily anguish.

The house party at Minton Court broke up immediately, and by noon the next day the last carriageful of guests had swept down the drive. Silence reigned in the large rambling house, Lady Minton and Miss Bligh's maid taking their turn in the sick room. As for Duncan Brooke, he hardly left his patient's bedside. Always a reticent man, not even his hostess ever guessed what he suffered during those long days and nights of anxious watching. At night, particularly, he would let no one else sit up with her, even if he snatched an hour or two's sleep during the day. For a whole fortnight she lay almost unconscious on the bed, unable to articulate, and only showing by her low groans that she was still alive—and suffering.

Then came a change, and Alison was able to speak again. One day the Doctor was alone with her in the room where they had laid her down on the day of the accident. The great

house was hushed into perfect stillness, and not a sound was to be heard but the occasional fall of a cinder on the hearth.

"Duncan," she whispered suddenly, with a very little sigh.

"What is it, my darling?" said the Doctor, bending his head to listen.

"I—I want to go to sleep."

"So you shall, dear. I will give you an opiate to-night."

"Oh, but I want to go to sleep for—always. I cannot bear it any more. It is all over for me now; all over, and I am only 22! I should go mad chained to a bed all the years I may have to live. * * * And you would learn to hate me—how could you help it? I know I am a horrible, maimed mass, although you have never let me see my face since."

"Oh, Duncan, and the pain! I cannot bear it. I always hated pain. I am sure I feel it more than other people do. And what I suffer now is inhuman! What have I done that I should have to bear this terrible agony? We would not let a dog suffer what you all look on and see me endure! It is cruel—cruel!"

"Alison, I would give my life to save you one pang."

"Would you?" she said eagerly. "I know you are brave and good. Have you the courage to help me now? Oh, Duncan! when you give me that chloral to-night give me enough to send me to sleep for always. No one will ever know. Oh, my darling, do me one last service!"

"I cannot do it," he whispered back, some inward voice telling him, even as he spoke the words, that here was the merciful euthanasia for this poor maimed girl. He knew that her life—even if she live!—would be henceforward a martyrdom, and that never again would she rise from her "mattress grave."

As night closed in Alison grew worse. She was evidently suffering frightfully. "I shall not leave her an instant to-night," said Brooke to Lady Minton, who stood with scared, white face at the bedside. "I cannot tell what may happen," he added at the door, having persuaded his hostess to take an hour or two's rest. "She might succumb now—from the shock—or she might live for years. I shall give her a strong opiate to-night she must have sleep."

"Thank heaven for one thing," said Lady Minton "and that is that you are here in the house. Think if we had been obliged to rely on the local practitioner! It is simply a mercy that you are here!"

"A mercy," repeated the Doctor gravely. "Yes; perhaps it is."

When the day dawned the house was all astir. Swiftly moving figures hurried up and down stairs, and the Doctor, meeting Lady Minton in the cold, gray light, at the door of the sick room, took her hand and led her away.

"Allison is gone," he whispered. "She passed away last night without pain. I was with her; she died in my arms."

"Poor darling! It is a merciful release," sobbed the kind-hearted woman.

"Yes, a merciful release," repeated Brooke, pressing his hostess' hand.

Next day Lady Minton went with a sinking heart to the Doctor's door. He had locked himself in ever since Alison's death, and had refused all food on the plea that he wished to sleep; but she found him sitting dressed at his writing table, having obviously never been to bed. Some medical books and sheets of manuscript lay about, he seemed to be writing.

"I am so pained to speak of anything connected with this awful affair, but you know there are the usual formalities to be observed. Poor Alison had no near relations living, so we must arrange all the last sad offices. Here is the Registrar's certificate. Will you, as you were her only medical attendant, fill in the cause of death."

"The cause of death?" cried Brooke, rising from his chair. "I—I cannot say—how should I know?" he hesitated, throwing up his hands.

The next instant he was lying in a senseless heap on the floor.

Six months after, the following paragraph appeared in an evening paper:

A HERO OF THE HOSPITAL.—Once more one of our most eminent physicians has proved that heroism is not confined to the winners of the Victoria Cross. It is with the deepest regret that we record the untimely death of Dr. Duncan Brooke of Grosvenor street, physician to the Whitechapel Hospital. It appears that an impatient—boy of eleven years of age—was suffering from acute diphtheria. The physicians agreed that there was a chance of saving the child's life if the operation of tracheotomy could be successfully performed. It will be remembered that in this operation the putrid and poisonous matter has to be sucked by the operator through a tube. In spite of the opposition of the other doctors, Dr. Brooke insisted on performing the operation, which was highly successful, the boy being now nearly convalescent. Dr. Brooke (who, it appears, received a severe mental shock some six months ago) was taken ill shortly afterward, and expired this morning in the hospital. Deceased was widely known and highly respected.—[E. Hepworth Dickson, in the Woman's World.]

Superstition Rife To-day.

From the Buffalo Express.

People are wont to boast of the enlightenment of this age and laugh at the superstitions of their forefathers. But it is quite safe to say that superstition is as rife to-day as it ever was, the only difference being that now people are ashamed to acknowledge their weakness. Said a real estate man: There is nothing which gives a building a lasting black eye quicker than a report that it is or was haunted. The slamming of a door, the rattling of a window, knocking down of a tin pan by pussy cat are all the work of ghosts in such buildings. And the worst of it is that people are just as afraid of a new building erected on the site of a haunted one as they are of the haunted one itself.

Curiosities of Currency.

From Texas Sitings.

Almost every nation and tribe, as well as every epoch, has its peculiar currency. Not only gold, silver, copper, brass, iron, lead and paper, but glass, shells, beads, books, stones, soap, bits of various colored cloth and numerous other articles have been used to represent money. The Burmese, Karens and Ghans have no coined money, lead and silver in bullion being the ordinary tender in trade, weight and purity being the standard of value. It must be a curious spectacle to see a Burmese out on a "hurry" with a lot of pig lead to spend at bars.

Salt was, for a long time, the ordinary money of the Abyssinians, which rendered it difficult for them to get a fresh supply when they were broke. Fish has long been and is now the legal tender of Iceland "Shad scales" as money probably originated there.

The Carthaginians were the first to introduce a stamped leather currency. Leather coins with a silver nail in the center were issued in France by King John the Good in 1300, but they are not good now.

In the interior towns of Northern China slips of the bark of the mulberry tree, bearing the imperial "chop" and a stamp to denote their worth, have long been used as we use bank notes, and mulefactors who counterfeited them got the imperial "chop" also. Marco Polo found this kind of money there in his time, and they have still an extensive local circulation.

In some small villages in Scotland laborers formerly carried in their pockets nails in place of coin to "pay on the nail" for the day's supply of bread and ale, just as a native Australian dresses himself of a string of beads for the purchase of some coveted luxury.

A Scotch missionary to a little group of islands in the South Pacific found bits of red flannel circulating as money, when they were not needed to tie up a sore throat. This came about in a curious manner. The body of a shipwrecked sailor had drifted ashore, and to these untutored clothes, who had never before seen anything of any description, his red flannel shirt was an object of wonder and admiration. By common consent they cut the garment into shreds, which thenceforth became the currency of the island. A savage destitute of flannel was said to have "nary red," we suppose.

A Finnish Girl's Farewell.

At Tavastehus I saw a group of eight or ten women, all well dressed, on the platform of the railway station. One of them was a rosy faced, pretty girl of 20. She carried a magnificent bouquet. She was the recipient of much attention from the others, who kissed her twice around. When the last warning bell rang she was locked in the arms of an elderly woman, who, with streaming eyes, strained her again and again to her heart, and I saw, asked the good God to bless her child. I knew they were mother and daughter. As the train pulled out the girl stood upon the car platform and bade them adieu with wet cheeks. But I thought I saw a ray—a gleam of cherry glow shining through her tears. I asked a man where she was going. "Till America—till Minnesota," she was the reply.

Al! I then read that hopeful girl in her tearful eyes. She was leaving friends and kindred to go all alone to the far off land, where her lover had gone before, and to fill the nest he had built up for his coming mate. Who knows what places high in the world the young to be hatched in that free nest may fall in the lake state of the north.—Carter Harrison in Chicago Mail.

No Wonder He Felt Old.

"The singular mistake," explains the editor of a Texas paper, "by which our leading editorial appeared at the bottom of a column on the third page was caused by our having entrusted the setting up of the same to a long slabsided Yankee jour printer who happened along and wanted a job. We told him to make up the forms and work the papers off while we went home to give our wife some much-needed assistance in making her apple-butter. The article was in relation to the recent act of the governor in pardoning a sheep thief, and was headed 'Crowning Folly.' The blundering tramp set it up 'Cranberry Jelly' and chucked the article in the department of 'Useful Household Recipes.' It is such things as these that make the life of a journalist one of constant care and anxiety and make him an old man before his time."

Elk Perkins on Bed Bugs.

A remarkable case of the death of a woman was reported recently from Franklin township, Beaver county, Pa. The death occurred while the woman was suffering from a violent attack of the headache, to which she had been subject for nearly three years she has been living in a house which has been badly infested with bed bugs. Shortly after moving into it she began to be troubled with a strange type of a headache which seemed to increase in violence with each returning attack until at times she was rendered unconscious by the severe pains, which she often described as resembling a heavy weight or pressure on the top of her head. The peculiar nature of the case and his inability to render relief aroused the attending physician's curiosity and with the consent of the bereaved husband he cut open the skull after the woman's death. He found firmly lodged on the top of the brain in a clogged mass, a number of bedbugs. How they got there baffles all who have heard of the case.

A Wonderful Cattle Pen.

Indian tradition as well as white lore tells that seventy-five miles northwest of Meeker, Col., is the most wonderful cattle ranch in the world. Within a space of five miles in length and a half mile in width roam a herd upon whose sides the branding iron has never been placed, and around whose horns the lariats have never tightened.

But a score or even fewer of them have ever seen a man or horse or other animal of their kind, and, in truth, their kin, except at a distance of nearly 600 feet high above them. The Ute Indians call them "p'chek-up" or red buffalo. And yet if an Indian who had seen them should be asked about it he would laugh and shake his head, and all the information obtainable would be "P'chek-up; em 'em red no ketch 'em." There are more than 600 of this herd, and yet no man owns them; nor is there any man, white or black or copper colored, who has ever been able to possess a hoof of these fat and tempting beeves.

The cattle are in a prison. Out of it there is one method of escape, but to travel that road means death to the adventurous one. There is no way to get in except it be by use of a rope a thousand feet in length. As the Indians say, "Heap see em; no ketchum; come away." On the two sides of the oblong space in which these cattle roam, are precipitous and even coned rocks for 500 and 600 feet. At either end seethes and rushes the Yampa or Bear River.

For miles above and for miles below it plunges on in its headlong haste to reach the arms of its parent, the scarcely less tumultuous but deeper Green River. Like the wonderful flat-top mountains of Colorado, this home of the imprisoned herd has no likeness in the world. It recalls, in its inaccessibility the marvelous stories of the valley of verdure into which Mayne Reid's adventurers only found their way by the assistance of the balloons.

The story of the way in which these cattle came there is as strange as their existence is curious. Fifteen years ago, when the government troops were pursuing the Mormon murderers of the innocent victims of the Mountain Meadow Massacre, the Danites, or Avenging Angels of the Mormons, fled into what was then literally the wilderness. A few of those who had been the blindest followers of Lee, the Mormon fiend incarnate, whose hands were red with blood of women and children, found in their wandering a pretty valley on a stream which flows from the Wasatch range into the Green River. They stuck their stakes, built their sagacious leaders had a vision which told them where to stay. They could scarcely have chosen in all Utah a more fertile or more isolated spot. They called it Ashley, and about them have since gathered more of their sect, until where the refugees posted the picket of guards on the lonely nights of the first summer has grown a thriving village.

It is 140 miles from the Union Pacific Railroad south and 125 miles north of the Rio Grande Western. Until within five years it has been isolated entirely but now it is thirty-five miles from the Utah Reservation, and furnishing supplies for the agency forms quite a business for the community.

It is a tenet of the Danites that robbing or theft from a Gentile is no crime. So it was thought to be only a cunning trick when Joe Wycliffe, one of the Mormon settlers of the new town, and his three sons made a night sortie on Henry's Ford in Wyoming, and carried away 100 head of cattle ranging there. This was in 1876. The owners of the cattle discovered the loss of the stock a few days after they were gone and started in pursuit.

The Wycliffes had their friends along the trail, and were warned by signals of the gang of the pursuing party. Accordingly they drove the cattle as fast as they could travel on eastward, across Green River and up along the Bear, with the intention of reaching the Elk Mountain country in Northwestern Colorado, where they would be practically safe from detection, and their stock, also could secure the most succulent of feed.

The thieves and the stolen herd had reached a mesa of inviting grass at sundown one day and halted to camp for the night. A terrific storm arose. The four men desperately held the terrorstricken cattle by riding about them constantly. But the wild fearfulness of the furious storm excited the brutes beyond measure. All at once, as if by one wild impulse, they stampeded. A stampede of cattle by day is calculated to strike terror to any heart, lest there be some lurking danger in the path way. A stampede by night is one of the most appalling spectacles. John Wycliffe and his sons endeavored to head off the stampeding herd. Instead, they and their horses were swept on and driven in the terror to escape the charge of the maddened animals, over the brink of the awful precipice which frowns up from the waters of the Bear. After them plunged the whole frightened herd, and down to the bottom of the fearful fall went horses and riders and horned creatures.

Out of this plunge, to what was seemingly certain death for all, a few of the herd were not killed. Those which had gone ahead formed a cushion of death. Maimed, stunned but still invested with a spark of life, when the storm was over the living cattle formed the nucleus for the herd which now roams at will within their rocky confines.

On the bank of the river, stretching back a few hundred yards, grow succulent grasses, and upon this the cattle have propagated and thrived. In looking over the precipice, one can see that they are small and as wild and agile as deer. They have been shot so as to see the effect, and have learned to regard the appearance of a man, whether Indian or

white, as a menace from which they flee, clambering over rocks and through underbrush to a point of concealment.

The place where the thieves and their horses and herd fell is plainly marked by a pyramid of bones, which rises to the height of twenty feet. The ghastly reminders, relics of the human and animal victims of the terrible leap shine forth white and glistening. The progeny of the surviving animals from the fall are fat and sleek, though, and have their sunny beds, deer like, where they lie for warmth in the winter. There is no fierce mountain lion or more dangerous bear, nor, in fact, any other animate thing within this cow garden of Eden. As yet, too, no man has been able to reach or disturb them.—Philadelphia Times.

How He Gave the Flies a Chance.

He was eating a substantial breakfast of steak and eggs in a well known restaurant a few days since, and the meal was enlivened by the presence of a small army of hungry flies, which perched contentedly upon the food and clung thereto much closer than a brother, varying their exercise by lighting on his face to rest from their labors. He bore the ordeal with supreme patience and unconcern for a time, but he had ordered a square meal, and as the waiter had deposited the check therefore he naturally desired to appropriate the majority part of the edibles to himself and to contribute but little to the voracious insects.

Finally he muttered an expressive oath as a detachment of the enemy made a bold attempt to carry off a roll, and dipping his spoon in the sugar he proceeded to erect sundry little piles of the saccharine pellets at intervals of several feet from the plate, to which he invited their attention and earnestly besought the buzzing besiegers to communicate their relatives and friends.

The experiment worked to a charm, for the dainty creatures preferred the sugar to the rump steak, and they feasted right royally and in utter contempt of the young man. When he left the table his face wore a triumphant smile, and he paid his check with so much promptness and satisfaction that the clerk ventured to remark that the meal must have been uncommonly well prepared. He replied, after some hesitation, that he had given the flies a chance and was at peace with all the world.—Providence Journal.

A Diet for Sharks.

Philadelphia Press.

When Capt. Andrews, in his little boat "Dark Secret," was about 1,000 miles out, he met sharks. This is what he did: "I had several cans of lamb's tongues, pickled lobsters, and sardines, that were partly spoiled. I took the tongues and tossed them over one at a time, and let the sharks hustle for them. I fed out all the tongues and some sardines. Then I thought I would give them a change. So I took one of my cannon salutes, cylinders, made to explode under water or anywhere. These are about five inches long and two and one-half inches in diameter, and as loud as a six pounder. I lit the fuse to one of these, put it in a can, and threw it over board. The quick ketch shark got it, and he soon became a flying fish. A deluge of bloody water swept over the boat, and the other sharks scooted."

Every Man His Own Pasture.

From Galleguin's Messenger.

A man went down from Paris to Autenail a few weeks ago and, hiring a room in a secluded part of the city, shut himself up in it with a quantity of provisions. He stuffed the key-hole with paper, pasted paper over the window panes and in other ways manifested a desire for secrecy. After he had remained there several days the inhabitants told the police about him, and the doors were burst in. It was then found he was inoculating three terriers with his own blood, in order to ascertain whether a bite that he had received from a dog was likely to prove fatal. He explained that he was experimenting in the cause of science and expected to discover some means by which every man could be his own Pasture.

The Painfulness of Death.

From the Forum.

The act of dying, it is now ascertained, is absolutely free from suffering; is really unconscious, insensibility always preceding it. Any anguish that may attend mortal illness ceases before the close, as thousands who have recovered, after hope had been surrendered, have borne witness. Sudden and violent death, shocking to the senses, may not be, probably is not, painful to the victim. Drowning, hanging, freezing, shooting, falling from a height, poisoning of many kinds, beget stupor or numbness of the nerves, which is incompatible with sensation. Persons who have met with such accidents, and survived them, testify to this. Records to the effect are numberless.

A Romance of the Wire.

From the Chicago Herald.

Mr. Lloyd told of a lady operator at Omaha and of a male operator at the Chicago office who talked over the wires unheard of those around, and how the talk led from commonplace to expressions of love, and then to pleadings of esteem from Chicago, with answers from Omaha that thrilled his heart with bliss. He had never seen her face nor heard her voice, yet he loved her just the same, and had promised to make her his wife. He asked Mr. Lloyd to bring them together, and the young lady was transferred to the Chicago main office. Two months ago they were married and went West where they now live.